CHRISTIAN
UNITY.
BY
REV.
MORGAN M.
SHEEDY.

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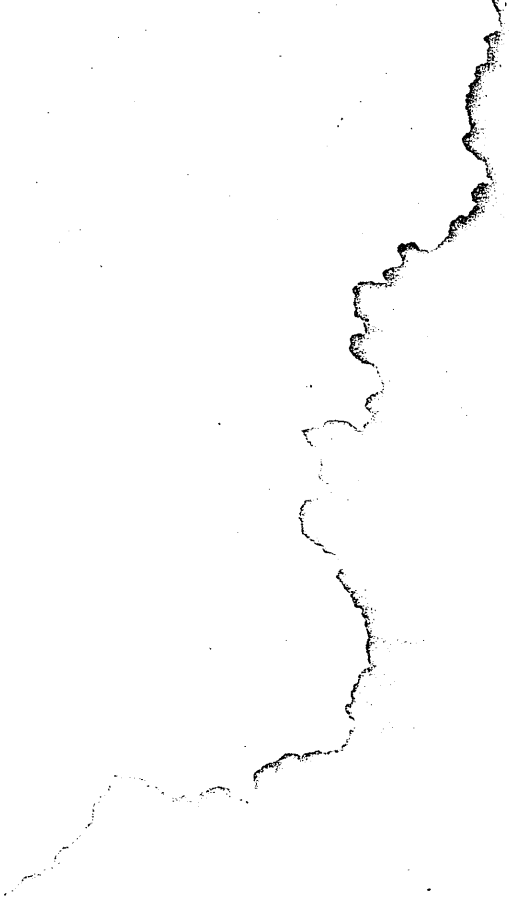

CHRISTIAN UNITY

BY

REV. MORGAN M. SHEEDY

"To what I now disclose be thy clear ken directed: and thou plainly shalt behold
How much those blind have err'd who make themselves
The guides of men."—*Dante's Purgatorio*, Canto xviii.

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Dedication.

TO ALL SINCERE LOVERS

OF

RELIGIOUS TRUTH,

IN THE

EARNEST HOPE

THAT IT MAY PROVE

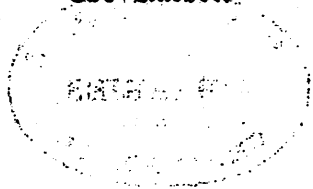
SOMEWHAT HELPFUL

TO THEM,

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS DEDICATED BY

The Author.



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CHRISTIAN UNITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE REUNION OF CHRISTIANS.

IN the remote antiquity of Egypt there was a legend that Osiris, the god of benevolence, was slain by Typhon, the god of hate, and his body hewn to pieces and scattered to the four winds. Isis, the wife of Osiris, from that time wandered everywhere in search of the mangled remains, that she might put bone to bone and sinew to sinew, and thus restore to life the form that she loved.

This story was widespread; under one phase or another it was repeated in Persia and India; it found its way into Greece and Rome; and was accepted by the Scandinavian ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon race. The legend expressed the universal desire that torn humanity might be reunited. This, too, was the dream of the ancient

philosophers. Three hundred years before the coming of Christ Zeno spoke of the fellow-citizenship of man, and said that the whole world ought to be one flock. Poets of all ages caught inspiration from the same idea, and have sung in fervid strains of the Brotherhood of Man.

Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, came to realize this story of the heathen, this dreaming of poet and philosopher. He showed how, through the acceptance of His Gospel, the unity of the race could be secured. He taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. No more discord or separation among children of a common Father "who art in Heaven"; one heart here, one everlasting home beyond. And riven as is the mystical Body of Christ, each member is instinct with this common life; each yearns to find the others, and cannot rest till bone shall come to bone, and flesh to flesh, and the beautiful Spouse of Christ shall be "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."

To do this the Saviour of the world did not trust to argument or affection or contingency of any kind. By His divine power He decreed that UNITY should be the special mark or characteristic of His followers. The Holy Scripture does not speak of the unity of Christians as a thing of the future; as something to be hoped for, but as an actual, present thing, an existing fact. "There *is* one body; there *is* one Faith; as 'There is one God and Father of all."

In our day—and we thank Almighty God for it!—there is a fuller understanding among Christians of the necessity of unity and its nature. The unity must be *a visible unity;* a unity seen by the world, perceptible to men; such a unity as will convince the unbeliever that He had a mission from His Father—"That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Christ evidently meant, therefore, not merely the unity of Christian souls, but the unity of the Christian body, or Church. The oneness of His people was not to be a hidden thing, known only in heaven, but an open sign

and protest against the selfishness, strifes, and hatreds of the world; a manifest proof that His disciples were under Divine Guidance.

Proofs abound that we have entered upon an era of good feeling between Christians. Everywhere it is recognized that the chief obstacle to the progress of the Gospel and the conversion of the world is the existence of divisions among Christians. The desire for a reunion of Christendom is a striking characteristic of our times. Separated bodies of Christians are being drawn closer together. They cease to think ill of each other, and are uniting, wherever practicable, in charitable and other good works. This is the first step towards that final and perfect union for which Christ prayed. And should no further advance be made in our day, every honest man is thankful for this better and more Christian feeling. Let us be done, then, with the gospel of hate—the impugning of motives, the unchristian denunciation, the bitterness of heart, the cruel annoyance and relentless persecution of former days.

From many quarters are heard sweet sounds set to the music of heaven, that tell of the universal desire for unity and peace. That desire finds expression in the tone of the denominational press and pulpit; in the action of various church bodies looking to Christian union; in the earnest discussions of the subject carried on in conference and synod; in the co-operation of Catholics and non-Catholics in temperance and charitable work; in the cordial invitation extended from time to time by the heads of Protestant educational institutions to representative Catholic clergymen to explain some points of Catholic doctrine; in the success of the Missions to non-Catholics conducted by the Paulist Fathers of New York; but most notably in the friendly acceptance by the Protestant world of the exhortation of the Head of the Catholic Church for all Christians to reunite. These are unmistakable signs that antagonism and strifes are passing away and that we are rapidly approaching fraternity and love, based on true Christian unity.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEED OF UNITY.

SHALL there be in our day, will there ever be, a reunion of Christians? Until this takes place, the force and directness of the arguments in favor of Christianity are lost on some minds. There are too many who avail themselves of the divisions and differences that exist in the great Christian body to say that it is useless trying to find out where the Truth, as taught by the Divine Teacher, is. "Agree among yourselves," said the heathen to the missionaries who were competing for his conversion, "as to which is the true form of the Christian religion, and then you may come and teach it to us." A perfectly fair and just saying, from the heathen's stand-point. And not only does reason demand this unity as a proof of truth, but Holy Scripture sets it forth as a prominent sign by which the unbeliever was to know that Christ was the Son of God. All through the New Tes-

tament runs this idea of the Unity of Christ's kingdom. St. John says: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." The last prayer that the Divine Founder of our holy religion prayed on earth was a prayer for the unity of his followers: "O Father! I pray that they all may be *one*, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be *one* in Us; *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that *they may be one*, as We also are one. I in them, and Thou in Me: that *they may be made perfect in one;* and that the *world may know that Thou hast sent Me*, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me" (St. John xvii. 21, 22, 23).

In that last solemn hour, immediately before the awful scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and whilst the false disciple was bartering away His life, the thought that was uppermost in the mind of the Incarnate Son of God was *the unity of His people.* And from the tremendous earnestness of the prayer, He evidently dreaded

more the division of His mystical body —the Church—than He did the tearing asunder of His real body on the Cross.

Where among the countless sects that the principles of the Protestant Reformation have given birth to can a vestige of that unity for which the Master prayed be found? Instead of unity, there is endless division and unceasing strife; sects warring against each other; the empty cry of peace where there is no peace. And then there is the sceptic and the scoffer, the unbelieving world that was to be convinced by this luminous sign of Unity, sneeringly crying aloud: "Look at those Christians; see how they love one another!" Every honest man recognizes the lasting injury and the weakness that the Christian religion suffers from the existence of sects. No one is more ready to admit and deplore this than modern Protestants. They very clearly perceive the want of unity, but seem entirely powerless in devising any means to bring it about. They see how strongly its absence tells against them in

the judgment of the world, but they have no remedy. Here Protestantism is perfectly helpless. There is no centre of unity. No solid ground upon which the different bodies can securely rest. And hence, as far as Protestants are concerned, the dying prayer of the Son of God remains unanswered.

It is recorded of the illustrious Father of his Country, Washington, that towards the close of his presidency he sent a farewell message to his countrymen. Calling himself "their old friend and affectionate fellow-citizen," he urged them to avoid dissensions, and thus make their union perpetual. These memorable words have been an inspiration to the Republic. Half a million lives have been sacrificed to make them good. But the last prayer of the Saviour of the human race is unheeded by those who call themselves His followers and who hope for salvation through His Precious Blood. He looked down from the Cross and saw the Roman soldiers parting His raiment; He looked forward into our

day and saw professing Christians for the last three hundred years rending His mystical body, the Church.

It has long been foreseen that the existence of a thousand different sects, with their varying creeds, means the destruction of what Christianity remains in the Protestant system. It can only be a question of time. And the sooner honest minds recognize this, the better will it be for the cause of religious truth and for that reunion of Christendom which is so much to be desired. Here it may be of interest to cite the words of Protestant leaders on this subject of unity among Christ's followers. D'Aubigné, the historian, writes: "The reunion of Christians—that is the Reformation of the nineteenth century." Bishop Whipple, the Protestant Episcopal bishop of Minnesota, says: "I believe our divisions are eating all faith out of the American people." President Sturtevant, of Illinois College, speaks thus of the existence of sects: "I affirm with awe and trembling that while the church continues in her

present divided and factious condition, *she is a false witness to her Redeemer and Lord; she fatally misrepresents His principles and His kingdom to the millions He died to save.*" Dr. Clarke, of Boston, furnishes the following evidence of the injury that is done the cause of Christianity through sectarianism. He writes: "In my judgment it is about time for truly Christian people to begin to look this matter of sectarianism square in the face, *as being morally wrong before God, and to cease to expect real Christian work without Christian unity.*"

In the next chapter we shall review briefly the present condition of the religious world and the causes that have brought about the unrest everywhere visible. We shall also see how Christian unity was destroyed.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS UNREST.

WHAT a distinguished political writer once said of France during its first Revolution, that "it had torn itself from the family of nations and become the antagonist of all," may be applied with equal force and truth to those Christian communities that embraced the principles of the religious revolt of the sixteenth century. Three hundred years have been required to show fully "how much those blind have erred who make themselves the guides of men" in spiritual affairs.

The present disturbances and bitter dissensions in the various denominations are logically due to the false principles laid down by the early reformers. The spirit of change and revision of creeds is everywhere asserting itself. There is a strong demand for the adjustment of Protestant formulas so that they may be acceptable to those holding the most liberal views.

There is a rude battering down of ancient idols and landmarks that fills the minds of steady-going church people with alarm. And all this goes on in the name and interest of truth. History, science, and biblical criticism are invoked to shatter not only forms of belief, but the very foundations themselves upon which that belief rests. There is a cry, which will soon make itself heard in many quarters, for a new reformation. Men talk vaguely about and earnestly desire a reunion of Christendom. Some take to prophesying, and say that in fifty years from now, as far as the United States is concerned, the Catholic Church and infidelity will have absorbed all that is left of Protestantism. And in truth it looks as if this prophecy would be fulfilled.

If this be the condition of the non-Catholic world to-day, it is obvious that the Reformation and its principles have helped to bring about this state of things. Looking backward one can easily trace, step by step, the origin, growth, and development of the almost innumerable divisions of

Protestantism from the fundamental principle of private judgment so strongly laid down by the first reformers. Having rejected the authority of the Church which was constituted by the Divine Founder of our religion "the pillar and ground of Truth," a mere fallible, since it was human, guidance was all that was left. Instead of Him, who was the Way and the Light, men were satisfied to follow their own ways and their own feeble lights; blind leaders of the blind, with such results as every honest Christian deplores.

It was foretold by our divine Lord that scandals would exist in the Church. Heresy and schism are justly counted among the greatest scandals. Hence one need not be surprised to find almost every age having its characteristic scandal. Heresies made their appearance in the very days of the Apostles and have continued down to the present time. All the early divisions in the Church were, however, trifling when compared with the great schism inaugurated by Martin Luther, the Augustinian monk.

The single act of Luther in rejecting the divine authority of the Catholic Church rent Christendom in pieces.

Up to the first quarter of the sixteenth century the unity and traditions of the Church remained unbroken. At that time began such a falling away from the one fold of the One Shepherd, the like of which the world before never witnessed. Then a movement began that aroused feelings of the most bitter and lasting hatred, which only the tolerance of our age has helped in a large measure to subdue. How far the scepticism, indifferentism, and materialism of the present day are traceable to the false principles then put forth we shall notice later on.

Martin Luther has been generally regarded as the chief author and apostle of the doctrine of spiritual independence; prior to the date, as everybody knows, that the fallen monk quitted his convent, leaving beads and breviary behind him, and went forth to publicly renounce allegiance to the successor of the Fisherman, the Christian

commonwealths of Europe were a unit in their faith. The creed which knit together the various races of Christendom was short and simple indeed. It was summed up in the words: "I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." The foundations on which belief in this article of the creed rested seemed immovable; the arguments in support of it were irresistible and well calculated to produce in sober minds a certainty approaching almost a scientific demonstration. Intelligent men reasoned thus: "Almighty God founded a Church, or He did not; if He did, He was bound to preserve it, more especially if He promised to do so. That Church which comes down to us in an unbroken succession from the Divine Founder and His Apostles, with every mark of its divine origin visibly stamped upon it, must undoubtedly be the Church of God." From this line of reasoning there was not, nor can there be, any logical escape.

CHAPTER IV.

FALSE PRINCIPLES.

THE Catholic creed which the reformers assailed was associated in men's minds with all that was great and noble and worthy of admiration since the dawn of Christianity. It had the honors of more than a thousand years in the greater part of the world. "There was no other institution left," in the language of Macaulay, "which carried the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. She [the Catholic Church] was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain; before the Frank had crossed the Rhine; when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch; when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca." And the late Rev. Philip Schaff, the distinguished Presbyterian historian, in a paper prepared some time ago for the General Conference

of the Evangelical Alliance, referring to the Church of to-day, writes: "She is still the largest body of Christendom, and nearly equals numerically the Greek and Evangelical communions. She is the best organized body in the world, and 'the prisoner of the Vatican' commands with infallible authority an army of priests and monks in five continents. She is backed by inspiring memories, as the Alma Mater of the middle ages, the Christianizer and civilizer of the Northern and Western barbarians, the Church of the Fathers, the Schoolmen, and the Mystics; the Church of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, of St. Benedict and St. Francis, of St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas, of Tauler and Thomas à Kempis, of Pascal and Fénelon. She is still full of missionary zeal and devotion, and abounds in works of charity. She embraces millions of true worshippers and followers of Christ, and has the capacity for unbounded usefulness. We honor her for all she has done in the past, and wish her God's blessing for all the good she may do in the future."

At the time when Luther raised the

standard of revolt her power and influence had been felt all over Europe. Every movement that aimed at promoting the welfare of the people was inspired and promoted by the Church. Learning, art, science, law, literature, and government were all deeply indebted to her. She was everywhere justly regarded as the kind and gentle mother, having at all times a tender care of her children. She had her religious orders, her monastic establishments, her universities, her world-wide relations all over the civilized globe. Such was her position and power at the outbreak of the Reformation.

What an idle effort, one might say, for a recalcitrant priest to raise his voice in defiance of so powerful and widely established an authority? Luther did not stand alone. There were mighty agencies at work back of him which he could summon to his side once the conflict was fairly begun. Nor was the ex-monk slow to avail himself of every instrument within his reach in his warfare against the Church.

Among the agents that he found most ready to assist him were the petty princes

of Germany, who were impatient to appropriate to themselves the divine prerogatives of the Popes; hungry nobles greedy to share the plunder of Catholic monasteries; there were good men, doubtless, scandalized by the corruptions of the times; bad men delighted at the idea of license always inseparable from great moral revolutions; and above and beyond all there was that large class of persons who, in every age, soon grow tired of what is old and are always allured by the glitter of novelty. All these ranged themselves on the side of the new apostle.

But the aid that the German reformer received from these sources, great as it was, seemed by comparison weak when contrasted with the wonderful influence of the creed which he adopted. It was the boast of Luther and his associates that they would restore to their followers those spiritual rights of which, they loudly proclaimed, Rome had robbed them; that they would restore that independence in questions of faith and morals that had been wrested from them by the constant aggres-

sions of an unlawful authority; in a word, that man should enjoy henceforth the fullest liberty of mind and conscience, having cast off the restraints and limitations of the Catholic Church. The cardinal article of the new creed may then be stated in these words: "*I believe in man's infallibility.*" It was taught that man was his own master in spiritual things, "that he needed no outside guidance," that there was no constituted authority, divine or human, to which he was in duty bound to submit. The cry soon became "*Every man his own Bible,*" which plainly meant, *every one his own church.* And so, indeed, it has proved to be ever since among those who have accepted the principles of the Reformation.

Die Bibel!—Babel. How aptly the clever epigram of the German philosopher describes the dissensions and confusion in the various Protestant bodies to-day? The Bible interpreted by the private judgment of the individual—and this is the very first principle of Protestantism—produces only division and discord—*Babel!*

CHAPTER V.

FALLING TIMBERS.

THE first and fundamental article of the creed of the early reformers, as we have seen, was a profession of faith in man's infallibility. No authority outside of the individual himself was needed in spiritual affairs. It was readily assumed that each follower of the new teaching was entirely capable to interpret the Divine Mind. The Bible which the Catholic Church preserved with befitting reverence and love was, through the newly discovered art of printing, placed in the hands of the ignorant and wise alike. It was held to be the supreme guide and standard for all true Protestants in everything appertaining to faith and morals.

This was a desperate plunge in the dark. It was made, as happens in like cases, without reflection, and only when too late was its dreadful absurdity perceived. Notwith-

standing the obvious difficulties to the position maintained by the reformers, men's minds were so clouded by passion or zeal at the time that these difficulties scarcely presented themselves. Down almost to our own day the absurd principle of "private judgment" of the Bible has been steadfastly maintained by Protestants. Why have they clung to this teaching in face of the contradictions and consequences which it involves? The reason seems to be found in man's innate pride and vanity.

There is no compliment more quickly appreciated than that which is addressed to one's intellect. To tell even the most ignorant person, that he is possessed of a plentiful supply of brains; that he is capable of doing any amount of thinking; that he can solve difficult problems; that he is equally gifted with his fellows in mental power; that there is not, nor ought there be, any intermediary between the soul and its Creator,—are assertions freely accepted as truisms by those to whom they are addressed.

"We shall be free. . . .
Here we may reign secure;
And in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition."

—*Milton's Paradise Lost.*

It is really surprising with what tenacity this old Protestant tradition keeps its hold on the minds even of many intelligent, educated men. Evidences of its falsity are constantly multiplying around them. Here, for instance, is the *Churchman*, the leading organ of the Episcopalians, writing of the remarkable changes that have been brought about in the faith of the various denominations of Protestantism. It says:

"The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England were never obligatory on the laity, and now they are not subscribed by the clergy of the Church that framed them. The Methodists are no longer rigid in their adherence to the modified form of the Articles which they adopted. The Congregationalists have virtually abandoned the Savoy declaration and the Cambridge platform. The Continental Churches have all

laid aside the formulas set forth at the Reformation. Of the Presbyterian Churches, some have modified the terms of subscription to the Confession of Faith; in others, the Confession has really been replaced by the teachings of dogmatic divines, and in this country the Confession itself is in process of revision."

It is evident, even to Protestants themselves, that their religious systems are going to pieces. The "plough of disintegration" is cutting deep furrows through every Protestant sect. Their platforms of doctrine are breaking up. The spirit of individualism, which has always been the controlling force of Protestantism, is asserting itself more and more, and it would seem as if any man with ordinary foresight must see that it is only a question of time for Protestantism to develop into agnosticism and infidelity. Yet, strange to say, they cling to the decaying platforms and falling timbers with a desperation worthy a better cause.

CHAPTER VI.

A REMARKABLE FACT.

WHEN we come to make a close study of the Reformation we shall find that it was nothing more or less than a test of man's fitness and ability to found a religion. Happily, that there might be no grounds for questioning man's power in this direction, few serious obstacles were in the way. If difficulties did present themselves they were soon got rid of. There was from the beginning, especially in Germany, comparatively a free and open field for the spread of the new gospel, and the march of Protestantism in the northern part of Europe was rapid and decisive. It secured a strong hold in Germany, Sweden, Norway, England, and Scotland. In these lands it may be said that the common people were robbed of the treasures of their Catholic faith. The new forms of religion were literally forced upon them by the strong hand of kings and princes who did not

scruple to have recourse to the most violent force and persecution. The fair form of Catholicism was covered with humiliation and shame. Insults were unsparingly heaped upon her. The name itself was made a by-word and reproach. Her priests and people were exiled and tortured. Catholic education was sternly prohibited. Religious houses were suppressed and plundered. Churches and stately cathedrals were desecrated or handed over to Protestants. Religious rites and duties, as understood by the believers of the old creed, were interdicted by a stern code of penal laws. In short, Catholics were denied in those countries where the new teaching was established the last vestige of civil, religious, and political rights.

It need not, therefore, surprise any one familiar with the history of the means adopted to propagate the doctrines of the reformers to learn that their success was almost unbounded. In fifty years from the date when the apostate monk renounced allegiance to the Catholic Church "Protest-

antism," in the language of Macaulay, "attained its highest ascendency." But he is careful to add "an ascendency which it soon lost, *and which it has never regained.*"

The writer whom we have just cited, in his essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes,* though unable to deduce any general law from the facts which the history of Protestantism presents, says: "We think it a most remarkable fact that no Christian nation which did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century should ever have adopted them. Catholic communities have, since that time, become infidel and become Catholic again, but none has become Protestant."

The "remarkable fact" referred to by the Protestant critic tells heavily against the soundness of the principles of the reformers. After the heat and passions that were aroused at the outbreak of the revolt had somewhat subsided men began to see more clearly the nature of the issues involved. When the pause came there was

an opportunity to weigh principles and measure the results likely to follow from the new doctrines. Intelligent minds quickly rejected the absurd assumption of the reformed creed which vested the individual with infallibility in the formation of his religious belief. The very idea was beyond reason. It was sure to result in religious anarchy. Again, it was not difficult to understand the ridiculous position that Protestants occupied in holding that the Bible, and it alone, was the rule of faith and conduct. Put the sacred volume into the hands of the individual, read it without note or comment, not to speak of a living interpreter, and the road to salvation was secure. It required only a short time to open the mind to the many contradictory views and opinions that must necessarily arise from the principle of private interpretation of the Scriptures. These views were soon formulated into articles of belief and became standards for new sects that multiplied on all sides. One need not, therefore, wonder or regard it as "a most re-

markable fact" that before the end of the sixteenth century there was not found a single Christian nation prepared to accept the new gospel. By that time its false doctrines were everywhere understood and rejected. A reaction set in towards infidelity and revolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and towards Rationalism and Catholicity in the nineteenth.

Even in the life-time of the reformers this reactionary feeling made itself felt. It showed itself in the formation of innumerable sects in Germany and England, and their offshoots in the United States and Canada. The existence of these almost countless sects, and the alarming confusion that at present prevails in the Protestant world with regard to the primary doctrines of Christianity, can be easily traced. The one and the other are plainly due to the principle of "private judgment," which is a principle of destruction. It is this principle that gives a logical standing to such men as Rev. Charles Briggs in the Presbyterian body, Rev. Dr. Bridgman in the Baptist,

and the Rev. Heber Newton in the Episcopal denomination. On this principle they can afford to laugh at heresy trials and rebuke their sect for its intolerance. "If it is heresy," writes Rev. Dr. Briggs, "to say that rationalists like Martineau have found God in the reason, and Roman Catholics like Newman have found God in the Church, I rejoice in such heresy; and I do not hesitate to say that I have less doubt of the salvation of Martineau or Newman than I have of the modern Pharisees who would exclude such noble men, so pure, so good, the ornaments of Great Britain and the prophets of the age, from the kingdom of God." Men's eyes are at last opened and they begin to see more clearly that the first principles were false to reason, false to the express teaching of the Divine Founder of Christianity, and consequently that the very foundation of Protestantism was a foundation of sand.

CHAPTER VII.

A MERE HISTORICAL EXPRESSION.

IT will be agreed, I think, by all who take the trouble to investigate the subject, that the world to-day is divided between two great forces or movements. There is, as Cardinal Manning observes, on the one side the One, Holy Catholic Church with its Divine authority, its Divine laws, and its Divine obligations spreading itself throughout the world and permeating all nations; and there is on the other side a society which is in the darkness of midnight, the deadly antagonist of the Church. These are the two great forces that are pitted against each other. They are necessarily hostile to each other. An unceasing war exists between them. And the result is watched with engrossing interest by widely different and differing classes of persons.

Protestantism is not in the field. In the language of a brilliant writer of the present day; "*It is now but a mere historical expres-*

sion; it is no longer one of the competing creeds, any more than Judaism is, or Arianism. Amongst the religious movements that claim the future of the world it has no place." And again: "Protestantism has not, nor ever had, anything that Catholicism has not got in far larger measure, and it has deliberately rejected very much of value that Catholicism has. Every Protestant hero, or book, or achievement could be easily matched by ten better from the Catholic record."

This same writer goes on to say, what every intelligent man must clearly perceive, that it is necessary to be a Protestant, actually to believe in the Protestant doctrines, in order to see anything at all valuable in Protestantism. A pure Materialist will have to admit that the Catholic Church has had a great place in the story of civilization. But the moment one abandons the creed of Protestantism it seems to have no claims, no arguments, hardly any history, certainly *no future.* It is nothing more than the servile worship of a Book gro-

tesquely strained in interpretation. Read the book, like any other book, it is demanded, and Protestantism becomes a shapeless pile of commentaries on the Hebrew literature. It is neither a church, nor a creed, nor a religion. Such is the account that Frederick Harrison, the English Positivist, gives of Protestantism. It is an account calculated to alarm still more those who have yet some hope in the future of Protestantism. What is specially impressive and singular about Mr. Harrison's view, and of others who have said the same things, is this, that it comes to us from men who but yesterday were the friends and champions of that system of religion which they now so vigorously assail. They speak almost with contempt and ridicule of the so-called Reformation and its modern developments. And, strange to say, they are themselves the legitimate children of the sixteenth-century reformers. They are men, for the most part, of high intelligence, fearless and independent, who do not hesitate, no matter what offence may

be given by the act, to press principles to their logical and necessary conclusions.

However strongly one may be inclined to agree with the estimate of modern Protestant thought as furnished by this class, we are not prepared to accept it unless the proofs are forthcoming. What are the facts in the case? Is there a great theological change taking place in the Protestant mind of our day? And what will be the result of this religious revolution? Will it bring men nearer to the Catholic Church, or drive them in large numbers into the ranks of scepticism and infidelity? What is the meaning of the upheaval that is going on in the Protestant world? What explanation can be given of the glaring fact that this religious revolution which rages so fiercely in the various Protestant bodies is entirely unfelt by the Catholic Church? Surely, there must be a reason for this. What is the reason?

No student of current events need be told that there is a veritable revolution going on before our eyes in the Protestant

churches. We are told that the remaining years of the century are to be years of fierce theological strife. Professor Briggs tells us that the present "theological reform can no more be resisted than the flood of a great river"; that the "century will close before the conclusion of the present movement" for the revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith can be reached. From the discussions that have taken place on this subject of revision it is learned that the great body of Presbyterians of this day have been formally professing doctrines which are really shocking and hateful to them. We find an old and stanch Presbyterian elder, a man of great intelligence, who confesses his ignorance of the articles of his faith concerning election, predestination, infant and heathen damnation, and the horror which these doctrines excited in him when they were brought to his attention. The late President McCosh, of Princeton, says that since the publication and discussion of those terrible articles, young men intending to pre-

pare themselves for the Presbyterian ministry have halted or actually turned back, horrified by the doctrines to which they would be called upon to give their adhesion. Yet the whole system of Presbyterian theology, of all orthodox Protestant theology, rests on those doctrines now so heartily detested by a very large number of the Presbyterians. Those repudiated teachings have been the very essence of Calvinism and the faith of Presbyterianism. Take away the doctrine of election and foreordination and the whole system goes to pieces. That body and the various other bodies that hold with it to the Calvinistic doctrines are left without chart, compass, or rudder.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH AND REASON.

IN the Episcopalian and Congregationalist bodies heresy, as tested by the old standards, is prevalent. Throughout the entire Protestant world a radical change of doctrinal views has taken place during our generation. The tendency seems to be towards future probation or practical Universalism, if it is not toward downright agnosticism or the entire abandonment of supernaturalism. The early reformers would find it rather difficult to recognize their latter-day descendants, so great has been the doctrinal change. To-day we find Protestants, like Rev. Dr. Briggs, looking to the Church and Reason, as well as to the Bible, as sources of divine truth. "The only authority to which man can yield implicit obedience," he declares, is "divine authority"; and the fountain of that is not in the *Bible alone*, but also in the "Church and the Reason." What would happen to

a Presbyterian professor who should have the hardihood to proclaim such teaching twenty-five years ago we leave to our readers to conjecture. What would good Protestants of the past generation think of the following statements coming from a learned Presbyterian scholar: "Protestant Christianity bases its life and faith on the divine authority contained in the Scriptures, and too often deprecates the Church and the Reason?" And again: "The majority of Christians from the Apostolic age have found God *through the Church.*"

In the Episcopal Church, and in some other Protestant bodies, the doctrine of Purgatory, or of an intermediate state, is openly advocated. At the last General Convention of the Episcopalians resolutions looking toward prayer for the dead, whose use can be justified only on the acceptance of purgatory, were defeated by a very small majority. Nor is belief in these doctrines confined to any one of the parties in that Church. Low churchmen and Broad churchmen joined with the most advanced

High churchmen in supporting the resolutions that embodied the teaching.

The Congregationalists are divided on the doctrine of future probation as applied to the heathen who have had no opportunity to accept Christ. Many of them either absolutely reject or doubt profoundly the doctrine of damnation as taught by Calvin and the old doctors of Puritan theology.

Thus, in the various Protestant Churches there is a great theological revolution going on in our day. Religious belief and sentiment are undergoing a very radical transformation. A new era in Protestant thought has begun whose characteristic aim seems to be to knock away the pillars of its ancient belief and to substitute reason for faith.

What causes have brought about these radical changes in the Protestant mind? What explanation is there for the prevalence of the sceptical and agnostic spirit among Protestants, which is rarely, if at all, found among Catholic Christians? These questions are easily answered and the answer should satisfy the most exacting mind.

CHAPTER IX.

A DISINTEGRATING FORCE.

ALREADY it has been noted that the fundamental principle of Protestantism is a principle of division and destruction, not only in the matter of creed, but in that of faith itself. Its history is the clearest proof of this. Divisions and sects began in the lifetime of the reformers. Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Zwingle, and others held widely different views on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The result was seen in their day, just as in our own, in the establishment of opposing divisions and churches. Before the death of the arch-reformer, in Germany alone, not to speak of the divisions elsewhere, there were as many as twenty-eight different creeds or formularies of faith. From that day down to the present the number has gone on increasing to such an extent that it is a diffi-

cult task to reckon them all. The spirit of Protestantism is revolutionary and destructive. Its first principles lead directly to rationalism and infidelity. The process may be slow, but the results are certain. Lecky, the historian, observes that "the corner-stone of Protestantism is an admirable one for a temple of Free Thought, and for nothing else." Dr. Philip Schaff, a leading Presbyterian scholar, in a letter read before the Evangelical Alliance held in Italy a few years ago, refers to the tendency of Protestantism towards scepticism and infidelity. "Protestantism," he writes, "is by no means perfect in any of its forms. It has its defects, and is liable, by the abuse of individualism, to run into sectarian division, rationalism, scepticism, and agnosticism." And many other instances could be cited in which attention is called to the "danger of the centrifugal tendency of Protestantism to excessive individualism and division."

We can, therefore, put our finger on the

prime cause of the theological revolution that is raging in the different Protestant churches. History confirms, what reason proves conclusively, that Protestantism is a disintegrating force and that the principle of private judgment leads logically to infidelity. And it is because intelligent minds in the various denominations to-day are becoming convinced of this, and are, moreover, alarmed by the growth and spread of Rationalism and unbelief among the Protestant masses, that we conclude a great transformation must inevitably take place. Already men are speculating on the outcome. The question is asked, Will the present movement for a *new* reformation result in bringing back to the Mother Church any considerable number of our separated brethren, or will it help to remove them farther still from the Unity of Faith and the bonds of Peace?

It is hard to say. This much, however, is certain, that the deepest and strongest tendency of our age is not toward division,

but toward reunion. The old prejudices against the Church are rapidly dying out. The Pope is no longer referred to in the *Confession of Faith* as "Anti-Christ." The civil loyalty of Catholics is unquestioned. There is no strife or discord over fundamental doctrines of belief among the millions who acknowledge the supremacy of St. Peter as vested in Leo XIII. The Catholic Church gives supreme authority to the truths of revelation. And whilst Protestants boast of an open Bible it is well to remember that they owe it to the Catholic Church that they have a Bible at all; and, furthermore, that they may soon stand in sore need of the Catholic Church to defend and preserve the Bible—the Protestant Bible—from being torn in fragments by Protestant critics. In view of all this we are not surprised to hear a strong cry for the reunion of Christendom. "There must and will be one flock and one Shepherd, as sure as Christ who promised it is the truth!" exclaims a Protestant leader.

"There are many," writes another, "who, while they are not willing at present to accept the teaching of Rome with regard to the infallibility of the Pope, or the doctrine of Transubstantiation, will eventually be glad to find a home in a Church which holds to the religion of supernatural revelation, and does not deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture nor put in jeopardy the words of Christ."

CHAPTER X.

HOW TO REACH THE MASSES.

EVERY one is familiar with the query, which involves a most difficult problem, so often propounded in the meetings and conferences of Protestant ministers: "How are we to reach the masses? What means should we employ to bring the vast non-church-going body within the influence of the Gospel?" Or the question takes this form: "Why is it," asks the despondent Protestant preacher, "that with our splendid churches, eloquent ministers, attractive music, and large outlay of money there are not increased spiritual results?" The answer comes from a prominent clergyman of wide observation, who writes: "We have magnificent church machinery in this country, we have costly music, we have great Sunday-schools, and yet within the last twenty-five years" (he is referring to the Protestant bodies) "the churches of God in this land

have averaged *less than two conversions a year each.* There has been an average of four or five deaths a year in the churches. How soon," he inquires, "at that rate will this world be brought to God? We gain two; we lose four. What will this come to? I tell you," he exclaims, "that while here and there a regiment of the Christian soldiery is advancing, the church is falling back and rapidly losing ground!"

Need any sane person wonder, when confronted with evidence of this kind, that the injury to divine faith must be very great, that the number of sceptics and unbelievers is increasing everywhere? If, at this moment, there is a rapid decline of religious belief among the Protestant masses of the population, and this has been going on for the last twenty-five years, what is the cause of this decadence? The Rev. Mr. Junor, of the Dutch Reformed Church of New York City, estimates that the population of the metropolis is thus divided with respect to religion:

Roman Catholics,	762,666
Church-going Protestants,	258,666
Non-church-going Protestants,	253,333
Heathen,	325,335

And this proportionate estimate would hold for our other large cities, Boston, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco. There is, then, a great falling-off in Protestant church-going. Dissension and doubt have made heavy inroads on the Protestant faith. "The only Christian communion," observes the New York *Sun*, commenting on these figures, "upon which modern scepticism seems to make no impression is the Roman Catholic." The explanation, then, is obvious. In the Catholic Church there is unity. In the Protestant body there is, and ever must be, divisions and sects. And sects St. Paul pronounces things accursed, classing them among the works of the flesh that are condemned. Go into any town or village of the United States, and you will find on close inquiry that the existence of rival sects has more to do with the decay of Protestantism than

all other causes combined. There is no place so poor in wealth or numbers as not to be able to set up two or three different church organizations, each, from the very fact of its being, setting forth the claim that it alone is the surest and safest way to salvation. The Protestant bishop Coxe tells how he visited a little village in Western New York where he found five spires pointing heavenward. There was no resident minister in the place just because of the five different sects. Each of the five church buildings was amply large enough to accommodate the entire church-going population. The bishop inquired what the people of the place believed in, what sort of religion they professed. This was the answer: "Many believed in spirit-rapping; others ran round to hear lectures on one subject or another, and heard a preacher now and again who told them funny stories and made them laugh at some of the truths of the Gospel." The amiable bishop on hearing this is reported to have used the following language: "If this be the result of your Protestantism, the land is the

devil's already." Nor is the bishop's experience exceptional. Some time ago the writer read an interesting report prepared by two Methodist ministers of what they had witnessed in certain districts of the West. One of these gentlemen made the statement that he found in an Illinois village, among a population of not more than eight hundred souls, *nine different Protestant sects!* "Why," said the other, "that is nothing; I have just returned from a rural district in the same State where I found among *seventeen families sixteen different forms of religious belief!*" And so it is all over the land. The many divisions and sub-divisions of Protestantism are everywhere visible and constantly increasing. From time to time attempts have been made to bring about a union of the different divisions of the same denomination, but in almost every instance the effort has proved unsuccessful. It is needless to refer to particular cases.

From this notorious lack of unity among professing Christians there arises the conviction in many minds, that there must be

something radically defective in a religious system that creates such a medley of warring elements and conflicting creeds. And the result is a loss of faith and Christian knowledge. The masses are indifferent or entirely outside the reach and influence of Protestant teachers. Protestant churches are half-empty. Many of them are abandoned altogether, or devoted to purposes other than those for which they were originally designed. Some time ago the Philadelphia *Times* startled many of its readers by showing by actual count that twelve Catholic churches had more worshippers on Sunday than seventy-six Protestant churches; the figures being for the twelve Catholic churches 49,178; for the seventy-six Protestant churches 24,007, less than one-half. In the West things are, if possible, even worse. Protestant ministers and church organs warn their people that unless there is a better church attendance some of the costly Protestant edifices of the large cities will have to be handed over to the Catholics, whose churches are always crowded, or be abandoned to the owls, the

bats, and the bitterns. The attendance at Protestant services largely depends on the "drawing" powers of the preacher. If the preacher is a sensationalist he is certain to have a large-sized audience until some one more sensational still comes along, or his hearers grow tired of his efforts. The most widely-known preachers of the day are those who cultivate this quality of sensational preaching. And the sensationalist, like Mr. Sam Jones, Mr. Small, or the boy revivalist, is in constant demand. Crowds flock to hear any of these gentlemen when they preach, and we read of the large number of obdurate sinners converted by their preaching. And yet how strange is their method of treating the truths of the Gospel, how flippant and shockingly irreverent are some of their sayings!

There is another class of Protestant ministers who have done much to weaken, if not destroy altogether, the faith of their hearers. Who are they? They are preachers who are secret or avowed sceptics. And they are much more common than is generally supposed. We only hear of the

few who are brought into prominence, like the Rev. Dr. Briggs, Rev. Mr. McQueary, or Rev. Heber Newton, by heresy trials. But these gentlemen and their supporters tell us that there are many other ministers in their respective denominations who hold the same views as they do. What is, indeed, strange and to be deplored is, that congregations stand by and applaud teachers who broach the most flat-footed infidelity. These preachers are actually praised for having, as it is called, the courage of their convictions. Men who have openly denied the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the Fall of man, the nature and extent of the Atonement, are nevertheless regarded as safe religious guides! Instead of receiving letters of dismissal they secure the warmest approbation of their people, an increase of salary, and more crowded audiences. There is scarcely a city in the country that does not furnish conclusive proof of this painful fact.

CHAPTER XI.

LAZARUS AND HIS RAGS.

IF there were nothing else to find fault with in the history of Protestantism, the fact that it has made little provision for the spiritual wants of the poor would alone be sufficient to condemn it. The divine Founder of Christianity lovingly called the poor "His own." And the Catholic Church has always regarded God's poor as her most precious inheritance. She, the spouse of Christ, has been taunted with being the Church of the poor and lowly, but she glories in being thus reproached. It is one of the marks of her Divinity.

What has Protestantism done for the spiritual needs of the poor? Some person has said that the Master's words, "The poor you shall have always with you," may well be erased from the Protestant Bible. They have no practical meaning. A wall of separation is built up between the rich and the poor in Protestant churches; at

the very threshold is erected an insuperable barrier which the humble and poorly-clad worshippers can never hope to cross. Some of the foremost churches of the land, according to the testimony of Protestants themselves, have been converted into *club-houses* where the wealthy and fashionable meet with an interesting and high-toned minister, where such can be had, as the central figure to hold what may not improperly be described as a mutual admiration gathering.

"The whole fabric of American Protestantism," says a writer, not a Catholic, in the *North American Review* for February, 1886, "is inwrought with the notion that class distinctions must exist, must be intensified in houses it erects to the worship of a Divine Being who is supposed to care nothing for such distinctions and whose Son, when on earth, consorted with fishermen and the 'lower classes' generally in preference to the company of 'nice people.'" Honorable exceptions are found without doubt, here and there; but the great stubborn fact

remains that American Protestantism does foster an exclusive, aristocratic spirit. The poor man, Lazarus, is made to feel that his rags are out of keeping in so fine a place, and he is assured that he will feel much more at home in the new mission-house which the church is so good as to build for him. "Say what we may," continues this writer, "the Protestant church has no place for the poor man within its pale. The wealthy churches snub him till he betakes himself to the unfashionable ones, or omits to go to church altogether; and the churches which lay no claim to being fashionable are yet not over-gracious to the very poor worshippers, who ought to be satisfied with the religious cold victuals proffered his kind at the mission chapel. It would not be pleasant to find a ragged, dirty stranger in our cushioned pew next Sunday. He would certainly be out of place there. Away with you, Lazarus, to the mission chapel where you belong! And so Lazarus is sent around to Protestantism's back door, the mission chapel; and Dives leans back

in his pew and listens graciously when the clergyman admonishes him never to turn his face away from any poor man, in order that the face of the Lord may never be turned away from him."

Is it any wonder that Lazarus, his soul filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy and the despitefulness of the proud, sometimes fails to perceive the great kindness extended to him, and either turns from religion entirely or enters *the Church* that makes him in his rags as welcome as the sinner that dines sumptuoûsly every day? Every sincere Christian must thank God that there is a Church where all worldly distinctions must be left outside the door; where the equality of man is fully acknowledged in the presence of the Creator; within whose sanctuary the wearer of "the gay clothing and he of the tattered sleeve" stand on an equal footing; where the equality of man is not a mere theory to talk about, but a great practical truth deeply recognized and frequently inculcated.

And in works of charity, what a striking

contrast there is in the histories of the Catholic and the Protestant Churches? How barren the one and how fruitful is the other in this class of Christian work? It is a glorious record, that which tells of the tender charity of the Catholic Church in all ages, in every land, and among all classes of the weak and helpless portion of the race. There is nothing to compare with it in the world's history. Outside of the Catholic Church there is found in Christian countries a feeble imitation in the philanthropic work that is carried on by individuals and societies of her magnificent triumphs of charity. It has not escaped the notice of those who have examined the history of the organized charities of the Catholic Church how there runs through it all the same striking sympathy and compassion of the Divine Physician for poor, suffering humanity. There is the spirit of patience, of kindness, of self-sacrifice, of generosity, of humility, of unselfishness, of sincerity; which St. Paul says are the true elements or ingredients of Christian Love.

And whilst she follows the rule, to a certain extent, that "charity begins at home," by giving her first thought and care to her own children, in truth she knows no creed or class in her work of beneficence. Her charity is as broad and universal as the Church itself.

The Church has not left to individuals or to changing circumstances the relief of the poor and suffering. No; she has from the very beginning, with singular wisdom and foresight, organized permanent institutions of charity. And the world has been quick to recognize the necessity and extent of her work of beneficence. Men are attracted to her by that admirable system of organized charity which she has established everywhere. The abandoned child of sin, the old man tottering to the grave, the leper deformed and mutilated by disease, the profligate woman, the beggar on the street, the man stricken by fever or the plague, the wounded soldier on the battle-field, the orphan child, the news-boy and the shoeblack;—each and all are the objects

of her solicitude and charity. For each class she has built nurseries, asylums, hospitals, and refuges. She has blessed and set apart in the numerous sisterhoods and brotherhoods devoted and heroic souls to minister to suffering humanity. Thus is she ever repeating the miracle of her Divine Founder when He said: "I have compassion on the multitude; for, behold, they have been with me three days and have nothing to eat."

Let me name some of those splendid institutions of charity with whose workings all of us are more or less familiar. There are the Sisters of Charity and Mercy, whose well-managed hospitals and orphan asylums are to be found in all our towns and cities. There are the "Little Sisters of the Poor," whose heroic charity challenges the admiration of the scoffer and the sceptic. Only fifty years old, this institute has houses, not alone in Europe and America but in distant India, China, and Australia. There are at present upwards of 270 houses of this community, 39 of which

are in the United States and Canada. Within the last half-century these Sisters have taken care of over 100,000 helpless old people, more than 80,000 of whom died while in their care. There are the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, who are extending shelter and protection to over 30,000 unfortunate women and girls. There are the daughters of the ascetic St. Francis and of the glorious St. Dominic, who are ever ready to face danger, and even death, in the cause of charity. In the leper colony of the Sandwich Islands members of the former community are to-day ministering to the unhappy victims of that most loathsome disease, leprosy. A sacrifice more heroic than this is hard to conceive; for on entering the leper island those noble women may truthfully apply to themselves the words of Dante: "You who enter here leave hope behind." There is no hope of life in this region of death. There is the world-wide work of the society of St. Vincent de Paul, which is an organized charity of Catholic laymen with its eight or nine

thousand conferences. The members of this society labor in the cause of charity without the pay or praise of the world. There is the Association of the Holy Childhood, which has been so warmly commended by Leo XIII., and which has administered baptism within the last fifty years to upwards of 1,200,000 children of heathen parents. There is the magnificent work of a single priest, Father Drumgoole, in New York City, who has made good and useful citizens of thousands of homeless boys. And so we might go on to enumerate many others.

Where is there in the history of Protestantism anything to compare with this? "Poverty," said Buddha, "is the curse of Brahma." Mahomet declared that God smote the wicked with misery. Paganism, ancient and modern, regards it almost as a disgrace. What estimate Protestantism has put on the words of Christ, "What you do for the least of them you have done to me," may be fairly judged from its history. Look up the record.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EVILS OF DIVORCE.

THE next feature in the history of the so-called Reformation that shows its downward tendency is the great injury it has wrought in society by its institution and sanction of divorce. The first divorce record of modern times was that granted by Martin Luther himself to the profligate Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. In England that "beast of a king," as he has been properly styled, Henry VIII., left the Catholic Church and took forcibly, by threats and persecutions and bribes, the greater part of the nation with him, simply because the Pope would not, *since he could not*, grant him a divorce from his lawfully wedded wife, Catharine. Thus Protestantism began in Germany and England by violent assault on the sacred and indissoluble character of marriage. And from the day that this business of divorce was

introduced into our modern society, the number of divorces in non-Catholic communities has gone on increasing with such alarming rapidity that it now exercises a most harmful and pernicious influence upon public morality. So hurtful and evil is the effect of free-and-easy divorce, that conservative Protestants are themselves crying out against it.

And no wonder, since most people agree that the family is the unit or foundation of society. Where the family tie is secure; where family life is pure and safely guarded; where the rights and relations of the different members of the family circle are duly observed; and especially where the solemn engagement entered into by husband and wife is religiously maintained,—there one may reasonably look to find peace, harmony, and happiness reigning supreme. But, on the other hand, wherever laxity prevails; wherever marriage is regarded merely as a civil contract, to be broken at the will or caprice of one or other of the parties; wherever the modern

institution of unlimited divorce finds acceptance, and is generally practised,—there society is sure to be in a disturbed and sickly condition. A blow aimed at the family by destroying the divine institution of matrimony, is a blow directed against the peace and well-being of society and government. If the family be destroyed, society is left without a sure foundation to rest on. How few realize that this must be the case? Rulers and legislators might occupy themselves with profit in devising means to put a stop to the alarming increase in the number of divorces in those countries where the institution is sanctioned by civil law.

Ignoring the divine law and the teaching of experience, the plea is made that divorce instead of being hurtful is rather a benefit to society, and therefore should be permitted on the score of private or public good. But in answer to this argument, which certainly ought to find no favor with those who profess to follow the law of the Gospel, it is enough to say that statistics

prove that freedom of divorce is not a safety-valve, but, on the contrary, that it exercises a decidedly harmful effect upon public morality.

What has been the outcome of this divorce legislation? Professor Frank Sargent Hoffman compares the statistics for 1886, the latest year for which full data are attainable. He examines the total number of divorces granted in the several countries of Europe, and in the United States. He finds that the number of divorces granted in Ireland (among Protestants, of course) was 7; in England and Wales, 372; in Russia, 1,196; in France, 6,211; and in the United States the number has reached the frightful dimensions of 25,535! The last-named figure shows an increase of 157 per cent. from the 9,937 divorces recorded in 1867, and Professor Hoffman believes that a conservative estimate would place the number of divorces allowed in the United States during the year 1893, among Protestants, whites alone, at upwards of 35,000! The aggregate number of divorces obtained

in all the States of the Union in the twenty years, 1867–1886, was 328,716; of which 139,382 put asunder couples having children, whose lives and interests were materially affected thereby.

It is certain that freedom of divorce does not tend to promote morality or to diminish the number of illegitimate births. Professor Hoffman agrees with the highest legal authorities in saying that "the desire to be rid of a relation that has ceased to be pleasant leads many a man, and not a few women, to conduct either intended to bring about that result, or recklessly entered upon in the feeling that, if such a result takes place, it will not be unwelcome." Statistics show that where divorces are most numerous, there illegitimate births are most frequent. According to Mulhall, the percentage of illegitimate to total births is 1.6 in Greece; in Ireland, 2.3, and in Russia, 3.1. In Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the average is 6.1; while in France, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, and the United States, it varies from 7 to 11.2.

Professor Hoffman believes that while separation from bed and board should be granted for certain causes, he holds, and this as the result of his careful investigation of statistics, that the evils resulting from the freedom of absolute divorce can only be remedied by the general adoption of the rule making the marriage bond indissoluble; that is to say, by an acceptance of the Gospel law as interpreted and enforced by the Catholic Church. We can see no indications, however, that Protestants are prepared to check the growth of the evils of divorce by returning to the Catholic teaching and practice. On the contrary, there is observed a greater toleration of divorces in what is called society than ever before. Protestantism offers but a feeble resistance to the baser passions of mankind. Hence its toleration of divorce.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME STARTLING STATISTICS.

WE have seen in the previous chapter that within the last ten or fifteen years the number of divorces yearly obtained in the United States has steadily increased. We have also seen that at present the old prejudice against divorce, founded on Christian principles and teaching, has very largely disappeared among non-Catholics. People marry and are divorced for incompatibility or because matrimony did not turn out so happily as they expected, and yet they suffer little or not at all in social estimation, even when they make new matrimonial ventures. There is much outcry among certain bodies of Protestants against our civil divorce laws as dangerous to the institution of marriage, but it is not rare to find members of some of the churches denouncing these lax laws who are prepared to

take advantage of them to escape from marriages, and they do not find it difficult to get ministers of their own or other communions to marry them again. Nor are they or their ministers subjected to any ecclesiastical punishment in consequence. Notwithstanding some agitation against the laxity of divorce, the multiplication of the grounds for divorce is the rule under American civil law. It prevails throughout the Union with few exceptions among the States.

Whilst complete returns of the number of divorces yearly granted are not easily secured, there is evidence only too strong to show that there is an alarming growth of the divorce evil. Let us look at the record of New England in this matter. What do we find? In the year 1878, and the number has increased in the intervening years, the ratio of divorces to marriages in the land of the Puritans was as follows: Massachusetts had in that year 1 divorce to every 15 marriages; Vermont, 1 to every 13; Rhode Island, 1 to every 9; Connecti-

cut, 1 to every 8. This is an alarming record. Now, if we turn to the record of another section of the country, to the Western Reserve of Ohio, originally settled by New-Englanders, we find even a worse state of things. The ratio of divorces to marriages in this portion of Ohio is double that of the rest of the State, whilst Lake County, the most Yankee in its original settlement, shows a rate of 1 divorce to every 6 marriages.

Some years ago Judge Lord, of Massachusetts, received as high as thirty applications for divorces in two days from couples none of whom had been married more than three years. With indignation the judge at last exclaimed, as the petitions came rushing in upon him: "I am here to administer the laws as I find them, but God help the land giving such appalling evidences of prostitution."

This divorce business is now managed with such skill and brought to such a degree of perfection by cunning and unscrupulous lawyers, that a man may retire

to rest at night a married man and awake in the morning to find himself single, his better-half having in the meantime secured the necessary documents.

A special marriage service also has been arranged for the convenience and protection of the Protestant minister who is called upon to officiate in the case of divorced persons. Here it is :

"The persons to be married anew to second partners being present, with suitable witnesses, it is well that the minister should briefly exhort them to the effect that marriage is a serious business, and yet not so very serious after all; and should encourage them to be of good cheer, because mistakes are easily corrected. After which he may read from Hosea i. 2, 'Go, take unto thee a wife,' etc.; and iii. 1–3, 'Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend,' etc. Then he will do well to omit the customary invitation to any present to show a 'just cause or impediment,' and proceed at once to require of the bridegroom to show good reason why he

has a right to be married, notwithstanding he has a wife living."

Then let the man answer thus, or to this effect:

"Here are the papers, all fresh and regular, from the Court of —— County, Indiana. Cause, incompatibility of temper, and the assurance of Messrs. Quirk, Gammon and Snap that they have been procured promptly and without publicity."

And the woman shall answer thus, or to the like effect:

"Oh! I'm all right. Divorce from the Superior Court of Connecticut, Chief-Justice —— presiding. Cause, conduct tending to defeat the object of the marriage relation."

Then let the minister say:

"Who giveth the indemnity bond to the minister to secure him, in case there should be any trouble arising out of this little affair?"

And this question having been answered satisfactorily then and there, by the execution of a good and sufficient bond, let the

persons take each other by the hand, and let the minister say to the bridegroom, calling him by his name:

"You, ——, take this woman to be more or less your lawful wife, and you promise to render to her the duties that society expects of you in this relation, until some incompatibility of temper arises, or until the present arrangement is regularly dissolved by the divorce courts. Thus you promise; though if you don't choose to keep your word, I do not see what in the world is going to be done about it."

Answer: "With this understanding, I do."

Then let the minister say to the bride:

"You, ——, take this man to be, in a certain sense of the word, your lawful husband; and you promise, having taken all necessary precautions to secure your property in your own right, to show a due respect to the conventionalities of society, until incompatibility or divorce shall part you. Thus you promise."

Answer: "It strikes me as safe to do so."

"I pronounce you, therefore, in the sense in which the words are used in the statute, to be husband and wife. And since your being joined together is in distinct contravention of the law of God, there seems to be no obvious reason why man should not put you asunder at his own discretion."

Prayer and benediction being hardly appropriate on such an occasion, the services may be concluded by the payment of a fee.

CHAPTER XIV.

A "FIN DE SIÈCLE" RELIGION.

RITUALISM—this is the latest and, at present, the most fashionable phase of Protestantism. It is also the most wayward and ungrateful child in the large family of Protestant sects, since it is continually vilifying and saying ugly things of its parent. For instance, such elegant phrases as the following have been spoken by modern Ritualists: "*The first Reformers were a pack of unredeemed villains*"; which they undoubtedly were, though our separated brethren were a long time in making the discovery. Better late than never to find the truth about those "heroes" of the Reformation. Again, speaking of the great religious revolt of the sixteenth century, some of our Ritualist brethren sum up their estimate of the whole business in this blunt fashion: "*Their boasted Reformation was a miserable apostasy.*" Beyond question it was truly this, and worse, as the Christian world has

found to its cost during the last three hundred years.

Some of our readers would, doubtless, wish to know what Ritualism is? It is a form or sect of Protestantism that is ashamed of its birth, that cultivates with passing success ceremonial grace and beauty in its services, that makes much use of ecclesiastical millinery, and caters largely to the æsthetic taste of the *fin de siècle* Protestant. It is, indeed, a charming thing to look at, like a handsome and beautifully dressed baby; but it will not stand exposure, and therefore has to be daintily nursed and handled. A religious "blizzard" would be sure to crush out its frail life. It bears externally so close a resemblance in many respects to our Catholic form of worship that a distinguished clergyman on being asked what precisely was the difference between Ritualism and Catholicity replied: "The chief difference that I see is this: the one has the *Papacy*, the other the *Apeacy*." Rather clever, if not too complimentary.

With that class of religionists who are

always sure to follow the most fashionable form of Churchism, Ritualism is likely to become, for a time at least, quite an attraction in this country, as it has been in England.

There are certain circles in the religious life of Americans where it is considered *vulgar* to be a Protestant; a (*Roman*) Catholic is considered, and perhaps we should thank God for it, a tolerable kind of person, provided he or she happens to be cultured and wealthy; but a Ritualist or, as they prefer to call themselves, a "Catholic," without the word Roman or Anglican, is just the thing. Ritualist ministers would be shocked—they are very easily shocked, indeed—on hearing themselves called "preachers." They despise that term. They invariably speak of themselves as "priests"; some of them go so far as to style themselves, and wish others to do so, "Fathers." In their churches they use crosses and the crucifix, candles and incense, vestments, stations of the cross, and "all the other trumpery," as it used to be called, "of the Papacy." They are continually blessing

themselves—some of them, it is reported on excellent authority, with the left hand as well as with the right; a mistake, by the way, often made by children and those who are just beginning to learn the rudiments of religious practices. Then again, and this could be set down in the list of latter-day miracles which it would puzzle one of our advanced modern scientists to explain, many of them have introduced the *confessional* into their churches. Who ever would have dreamed of such an innovation as this? Auricular confession, inculcated and practised by Protestants—for such the Ritualists are, no matter how strongly they may *protest* against the use of the word as applied to them—after three centuries of the most constant, wanton, and blasphemous abuse of that divine institution! Now at last the light has come in upon them that this "powerful engine of priestcraft" may be, after all, from God. Surely when those things occur under our very eyes we cannot help crying out in utter amazement—wonderful age *this!*

CHAPTER XV.

SOME STRANGE PRACTICES.

THOUGH the confessional has been introduced into Episcopalian churches and the practice of auricular confession urged by a certain class of its ministers, the number of confessions heard by those Ritualistic confessors is said not to be very great. Somehow or other it is rather difficult to make the greatest devotee of Ritualism understand the utility of this means of grace and spiritual consolation. It is told by one of our Catholic missionaries how a certain Protestant woman came to him one day and expressed a desire "to go to confession." From her manner the good priest had serious doubts about her Catholicity. And he said to her: "Madam, are *you* a Catholic?" "No, sir," she answered, "I am an Episcopalian." "Well, then," said the missionary father, "why not go to confession to your own minister?" "Oh!" she

replied, entirely satisfied with the force of the answer, "*I can't bring myself to do that since he is a married man.*" Many of the Ritualistic "Fathers," it may be observed, have not advanced so far as to accept the discipline of celibacy. All of them, we hope, will get to that later on.

At one of the recent General Conventions of the Episcopalians the following resolution was introduced :

"*Resolved,* That the Committee on Liturgical Revision be instructed to add to the office for the burial of the dead some suitable prayer commending the departed soul to its Creator and Saviour."

Of course such a resolution meant the introduction of prayers for the dead, and the adoption of a custom and the sanction of a doctrine against which Protestants have vehemently protested for the last three centuries. It implied belief, if not in the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, at least in the theory of future probation, in opposition to the old Protestant teaching that the dead are beyond the reach of prayer, and that their spiritual and eternal state

has been determined. Yet this resolution only failed of passage by five votes out of two hundred and thirty in all!

The subject was brought up later on in this same General Convention of the Episcopalians in the form of a commendatory prayer for a person at the point of death, thus framed:

"Into thy hands, O merciful Saviour, we commend the soul of Thy servant, now departing from the body. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech Thee, a sheep of Thine own fold, a lamb of Thine own flock, a sinner of Thine own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of Thy mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and at the last into the glorious estate of Thy chosen saints in heaven. O most merciful Jesus, none can perish whom Thou takest into Thy charge. Receive, we beseech Thee, Thy servant's soul in peace. Amen."

That also was construed, and rightly construed, as sanctioning the principle of prayers for the dead, and accordingly there was a heated discussion over the proposed prayer. From this it is evident that the "dread of Romish tendencies" is rapidly

passing away and that eventually, if not in the near future, prayers for the dead will become, like so many other Catholic practices, a part of the Episcopal liturgy.

It will be simply a return to the spirit of the liturgy of Edward VI., so grateful to the Ritualistic party, and which included in the burial service this supplication:

"Grant unto this Thy servant that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed unto him, but that he, escaping the gates of hell and eternal darkness, may ever dwell in the region of light, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the place where there is no weeping, sorrow, nor heaviness; and when that dreadful day of the general resurrection shall come make him to rise also with the just and righteous, and receive this body again to glory, then made pure and incorruptible."

This prayer was afterwards changed, with a view to avoiding praying for the dead, but we now see that a strong body, not only of English but American Episcopalians, are anxious to return to the old Catholic practice, which existed in the Church long before the time of Edward VI.

Nor are Episcopalians alone among

Protestants in abandoning opposition to prayers for the dead. The Congregational Board is assailed because it makes the suggestion of future probation a disqualification for its service, though such belief makes consistent, if not essential, prayer for the dead. There have been Congregational ministers of late years who were not at all frightened by this logical result from their teachings.

A wonderful transformation, we see, has been going on in Protestant belief and practice. And it is a hopeful sign that the trend is, with a large and earnest body of believers, towards the Church of *our* Fathers.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

WHILST there is on the one side a marked tendency towards unity with the Catholic Church—and that is chiefly noticeable among the High-Church or Ritualist party of the Episcopalian body—there is, on the other hand, among American Protestants a widely-spread spirit of scepticism or unbelief. And this latter tendency is in the direction of the grosser forms of materialism and sensualism. Those who closely scan the daily doings of our social life are justly alarmed by its ugly revelations. The drift seems to be downward, to a lower and more sensual mode of living, rather than upward to a higher and purer life. Incidents in our modern society are of such frequent occurrence as to strike a truly Christian soul with horror and shame. So much so that one is reminded of that loathsome condition

of English society to which the poet referred when he wrote:

> "Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
> And unawares morality expires;
> Nor public flame, nor private dares to shine,
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine."

Nor would it be difficult to trace the growth of modern scepticism and that spirit of social unrest which threatens the peace of the world to the principles of the sixteenth-century revolt.

The conclusion that has been reached by those who have studied the question, and its truth is confirmed by a multitude of facts so obvious that no one seriously disputes them, is this: that the great moral upheaval, known as the Protestant Reformation, which at one time threatened to engulf, if it were possible, the Church of God, has spent its force. Its moral and social influence is rapidly passing away. Its flattering creed, the fruitful parent of many heresies, is discarded; all that was false and fanatical in its early history is well-nigh eliminated; and there is to-day a

better, because a more Catholic spirit, among its professed adherents.

To be sure, the Reformation wrought much mischief in the world for the last three centuries, nor has society witnessed the last evil fruits of its teaching. It opened wide the flood-gates of irreligion, and revived scores of exploded heresies to run anew their pernicious careers; it attacked the very foundations of faith and morals by substituting the fantastic notions of man for the wisdom of God as declared through His appointed oracles. However, though it has done all this, because of the abiding promises of the divine Founder of Christianity the vital doctrines of religion have not suffered, as no truth can permanently suffer from being submitted to the crucial inquest of doubt. The cross has vindicated its dignity as the noblest of spiritual symbols; and its increasing ascendency over the minds and hearts of men, as witnessed in the many who to-day the world over are returning to the Church of their fathers, is a grand historical proof of

the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." As the smoke and dust of the long and bitter conflict between religious truth and error are clearing away, earnest souls lift up their eyes to recognize once more the fair form of Catholicism, radiant with hope and the crown of victory. "I have seen" (sings Tennyson)

"A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the pine,
The cataract shook the shadow. To my mind
The cataract typed the headlong plunge and fall
Of heresy to the pit; *the pine* was ROME."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

Encyclical Letter, June 20, 1894.

THE splendid tokens of public rejoicing which have come to Us from all sides in the whole course of last year, to commemorate Our Episcopal Jubilee, and which were lately crowned by the remarkable devotion of the Spanish nation, have afforded Us special joy, inasmuch as the unity of the Church and the admirable adhesion of her members to the Sovereign Pontiff have shone forth in this perfect agreement of concurring sentiments. During those days it seemed as if the Catholic world, forgetful of everything else, had centred its gaze and all its thoughts upon the Vatican.

The special missions sent by kings and princes, the many pilgrimages, the letters We received so full of affectionate feeling, the sacred services—everything clearly brought out the fact that all Catholics are of one mind and of one heart in their veneration for the Apostolic See. And this was all the more pleasing and agreeable to Us, that it is entirely in con-

formity with Our intent and with Our endeavors. For, indeed, well acquainted with Our times, and mindful of the duties of Our ministry, We have constantly sought during the whole course of Our Pontificate, and striven, as far as it was possible, by teaching and action, to bind every nation and people more closely to us, and make manifest everywhere the salutary influence of the See of Rome. Therefore do we most earnestly offer thanks in the first place to the goodness of God, by Whose help and bounty We have been preserved to attain Our great age; and then, next, to all the princes and rulers, to the bishops and clergy, and to as many as have co-operated by such repeated tokens of piety and reverence, to honor Our character and office, while affording Us personally such seasonable consolation.

A great deal, however, has been wanting to the entire fulness of that consolation. Amidst these very manifestations of public joy and reverence Our thoughts went out towards the immense multitude of those who were strangers to the gladness that filled all Catholic hearts; some because they lie in absolute ignorance of the Gospel; others because they dissent from the Catholic belief, though they bear the name of Christians.

This thought has been, and is, a source of

deep concern to Us; for it is impossible to think of such a large portion of mankind, deviating, as it were, from the right path, as they move away from Us, and not experience a sentiment of innermost grief.

But since We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty, Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and now that Our advanced age and the bitterness of anxious cares urge Us on towards the end common to every mortal, We feel drawn to follow the example of Our Redeemer and Master Jesus Christ, Who, when about to return to Heaven, implored of God, His Father, in earnest prayer, that His disciples and followers should be of one mind and of one heart: *I pray . . . that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee : that they also may be one in Us.* And as this Divine prayer and supplication does not include only the souls who then believed in Jesus Christ, but also every one of those who were henceforth to believe in Him, this prayer holds out to Us no indifferent reason for confidently expressing Our hopes, and for making all possible endeavors, in order that the men of every race and clime should be called and moved to embrace the unity of Divine faith.

Pressed on to Our intent by charity, that hastens fastest there where the need is greatest,

We direct Our first thoughts to those most unfortunate of all nations who have never received the light of the Gospel, or who, after having possessed it, have lost it through neglect or the vicissitudes of time: hence do they ignore God, and live in the depths of error. Now, as all salvation comes from Jesus Christ—*for there is no other name under Heaven given to men whereby we must be saved*—Our ardent desire is that the most holy Name of Jesus should rapidly pervade and fill every land.

And here, indeed, is a duty which the Church, faithful to the Divine mission entrusted to her, has never neglected. What has been the object of her labors for more than nineteen centuries? Is there any other work she has undertaken with greater zeal and constancy than that of bringing the nations of the earth to the truth and principles of Christianity? To-day, as ever, by Our authority, the heralds of the Gospel constantly cross the seas to reach the farthest corners of the earth; and We pray God daily that in His goodness He may deign to increase the number of His ministers who are really worthy of this Apostolate, and who are ready to sacrifice their convenience, their health, and their very life, if need be, in order to extend the frontiers of the kingdom of Christ.

Do Thou, above all, O Saviour and Father

of mankind, Christ Jesus, hasten and do not delay to bring about what Thou didst once promise to do—that when lifted up from the earth Thou wouldst draw all things to Thyself. Come then, at last, and manifest Thyself to the immense multitude of souls who have not felt, as yet, the ineffable blessings which Thou hast earned for men with Thy blood; rouse those who are sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death, that, enlightened by the rays of Thy wisdom and virtue, in Thee and by Thee "they may be made perfect in one."

As We consider the mystery of this unity We see before Us all the countries which have long since passed, by the mercy of God, from time-worn error to the wisdom of the Gospel. Nor could We, indeed, recall anything more pleasing or better calculated to extol the work of Divine Providence, than the memory of the days of yore, when the Faith that had come down from Heaven was looked upon as the common inheritance of one and all; when civilized nations, separated by distance, character, and habits, in spite of frequent disagreements and warfare on other points, were united by Christian faith in all that concerned religion. The recollection of that time causes Us to regret all the more deeply that, as the ages rolled by, the waves of suspicion and hatred arose, and great and flourishing nations were dragged

away, in an evil hour, from the bosom of the Roman Church. In spite of that, however, We trust in the mercy of God's Almighty power, in Him Who alone can fix the hour of His benefits and Who has power to incline man's will as He pleases; and We turn to those same nations, exhorting and beseeching them with fatherly love to put an end to their dissensions and return again to unity.

First of all, then, We cast an affectionate look upon the East, from whence in the beginning came forth the salvation of the world. Yes, and the yearning desire of Our heart bids Us conceive the hope that the day is not far distant when the Eastern Churches, so illustrious in their ancient faith and glorious past, will return to the fold they have abandoned. We hope it, all the more, that the distance separating them from us is not so great: nay, with some few exceptions, we agree so entirely on other heads that, in defence of the Catholic faith, we often have recourse to reasons and testimony borrowed from the teaching, the rites and customs of the East.

The principal subject of contention is the primacy of the Roman Pontiff. But let them look back to the early years of their existence, let them consider the sentiments entertained by their forefathers, and examine what the oldest traditions testify, and it will, indeed, become

evident to them that Christ's Divine utterance, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church*, has undoubtedly been realized in the Roman Pontiffs. Many of these latter in the first ages of the Church were chosen from the East, and foremost among them Anacletus, Evaristus, Anicetus, Eleutherius, Zosimus, and Agatho; and of these a great number, after governing the Church in wisdom and sanctity, consecrated their ministry with the shedding of their blood. The time, the reasons, the promoters of the unfortunate division are well known. Before the day when man separated what God had joined together, the name of the Apostolic See was held in reverence by all the nations of the Christian world: and the East, like the West, agreed without hesitation in its obedience to the Pontiff of Rome, as the legitimate successor of St. Peter, and, therefore, the Vicar of Christ here on earth.

And, accordingly, if we refer to the beginning of the dissension, we shall see that Photius himself was careful to send his advocates to Rome on the matters that concerned him; and Pope Nicolas I. sent his legates to Constantinople from the Eternal City, without the slightest opposition, "in order to examine the case of Ignatius the Patriarch with all diligence, and to bring back to the Apostolic See a full and accurate report"; so that the history of

the whole negotiation is a manifest confirmation of the primacy of the Roman See with which the dissension then began. Finally, in two great Councils, the second of Lyons and that of Florence, Latins and Greeks, as is notorious, easily agreed, and all unanimously proclaimed as dogma the supreme power of the Roman Pontiffs.

We have recalled these things intentionally, for they constitute an invitation to peace and reconciliation; and with all the more reason that in Our own days it would seem as if there were a more conciliatory spirit towards Catholics on the part of the Eastern Churches, and even some degree of kindly feeling. To mention an instance, those sentiments were lately made manifest when some of Our Faithful travelled to the East on a holy enterprise, and received so many proofs of courtesy and goodwill.

Therefore *Our mouth is open to you*, to you all of Greek or other Oriental Rites who are separated from the Catholic Church. We earnestly desire that each and every one of you should meditate upon the words, so full of gravity and love, addressed by Bessarion to your forefathers: "What answer shall we give to God when He comes to ask why we have separated from our brethren: to Him Who, to unite us and bring us into one fold, came down from

heaven, was incarnate, and was crucified? What will our defence be in the eyes of posterity? Oh! my venerable fathers, we must not suffer this to be, we must not entertain this thought, we must not thus so ill provide for ourselves and for our brethren."

Weigh carefully in your minds and before God the nature of Our request. It is not for any human motive, but impelled by Divine charity and a desire for the salvation of all, that We advise the reconciliation and union with the Church of Rome; and We mean a perfect and complete union, such as could not subsist in any way if nothing else was brought about but a certain kind of agreement in the tenets of belief and an intercourse of fraternal love. The true union between Christians is that which Jesus Christ, the Author of the Church, instituted and desired, and which consists in a unity of faith and a unity of government.

Nor is there any reason for you to fear on that account that We or any of Our successors will ever diminish your rights, the privileges of your patriarchs, or the established ritual of any one of your Churches. It has been and always will be the intent and tradition of the Apostolic See to make a large allowance, in all that is right and good, for the primitive traditions and special customs of every nation. On

the contrary, if you re-establish union with Us, you will see how, by God's bounty, the glory and dignity of your Churches will be remarkably increased. May God, then, in His goodness, hear the prayer that you yourselves address to Him: "Make the schisms of the Churches cease," and "Assemble those who are dispersed, bring back those who err, and unite them to Thy Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." May you thus return to that one holy Faith which has been handed down both to Us and to you from time immemorial; which your forefathers preserved untainted, and which was enhanced by the rival splendor of the virtues, the great genius, and the sublime learning of St. Athanasius and St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzum and St. John Chrysostom, the two Saints who bore the name of Cyril, and so many other great men whose glory belongs as a common inheritance to the East and to the West.

Suffer that We should address you more particularly, nations of the Slavonic race, you whose glorious name and deeds are attested by many an ancient record. You know full well how much the Slavs are indebted to the merits of St. Cyril and St. Methodius, to whose memory We Ourselves rendered due honor only a few years ago. Their virtues and their labors were to great numbers of your race the source

of civilization and salvation. And hence the admirable interchange, which existed for so long between the Slavonic nations and the Pontiffs of Rome, of favors on the one side and of filial devotion on the other. If in unhappy times many of your forefathers were separated from the Faith of Rome, consider now what priceless benefits a return of unity would bring to you. The Church is anxious to welcome you also to her arms, that she may give you manifold aids to salvation, prosperity, and grandeur.

With no less affection do We now look upon the nations who, at a more recent date, were separated from the Roman Church by an extraordinary revolution of things and circumstances. Let them forget the various events of times gone by, let them raise their thoughts far above all that is human, and seeking only truth and salvation, reflect within their hearts upon the Church as it was constituted by Christ. If they will but compare that Church with their own communions, and consider what the actual state of religion is in these, they will easily acknowledge that, forgetful of their early history, they have drifted away, on many and important points, into the novelty of various errors; nor will they deny that of what may be called the patrimony of truth, which the authors of those innovations carried away with

them in their desertion, there now scarcely remains to them any article of belief that is really certain and supported by authority.

Nay, more, things have already come to such a pass that many do not even hesitate to root up the very foundation upon which alone rests all religion, and the hope of men, to wit, the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. And again, whereas formerly they used to assert that the books of the Old and New Testament were written under the inspiration of God, they now deny them that authority: this, indeed, was an inevitable consequence when they granted to all the right of private interpretation. Hence, too, the acceptance of individual conscience as the sole guide and rule of conduct, to the exclusion of any other: hence those conflicting opinions and numerous sects that fall away so often into the doctrines of Naturalism and Rationalism.

Therefore is it, that having lost all hope of an agreement in their persuasions, they now proclaim and recommend a union of brotherly love. And rightly too, no doubt, for we should all be united by the bond of mutual charity. Our Lord Jesus Christ enjoined it most emphatically, and wished that this love of one another should be the mark of His disciples. But how can hearts be united in perfect charity where minds do not agree in faith?

It is on this account that many of those We allude to, men of sound judgment and seeking after truth, have looked to the Catholic Church for the sure way of salvation; for they clearly understand that they could never be united to Jesus Christ as their head if they were not members of His body, which is the Church; nor really acquire the true Christian faith if they rejected the legitimate teaching confided to Peter and his successors. Such men as these have recognized in the Church of Rome the form and image of the true Church, which is clearly made manifest by the marks that God, her Author, placed upon her; and not a few who were possessed with penetrating judgment and a special talent for historical research, have shown forth in their remarkable writings the uninterrupted succession of the Church of Rome from the Apostles, the integrity of her doctrine, and the consistency of her rule and discipline.

With the example of such men before you, Our heart appeals to you even more than Our words: to you, Our Brethren, who for three centuries and more differ from Us on Christian faith; and to you all likewise, who in later times, for any reason whatsoever, have turned away from Us: *Let us all meet in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.* Suffer that We should invite you to the unity

which has ever existed in the Catholic Church and can never fail; suffer that We should lovingly hold out Our hand to you. The Church, as the common mother of all, has long been calling you back to her; the Catholics of the world await you with brotherly love, that you may render holy worship to God together with Us, united in perfect charity by the profession of one Gospel, one faith, and one hope.

To complete the harmony of this most desired unity, it remains for Us to address all those throughout the world whose salvation has long been the object of Our thoughts and watchful cares; We mean Catholics, whom the profession of the Roman faith, while it renders them obedient to the Apostolic See, preserves in union with Jesus Christ. There is no need to exhort them to true and holy unity, since through the Divine goodness they already possess it; nevertheless, they must be admonished, lest under pressure of the growing perils on all sides around them, through negligence or indolence they should lose this great blessing of God. For this purpose, let them take their rule of thought and action, as the occasion may require, from those instructions which at other times We have addressed to Catholic peoples, either collectively or individually; and above all, let them lay down for themselves as a su-

preme law, to yield obedience in all things to the teaching and authority of the Church, in no narrow or mistrustful spirit, but with their whole soul and promptitude of will.

On this account let them consider how injurious to Christian unity is that error which in various forms of opinion has ofttimes obscured, nay, even destroyed the true character and idea of the Church. For by the will and ordinance of God, its Founder, it is a society perfect in its kind, whose office and mission it is to school mankind in the precepts and teachings of the Gospel, and by safeguarding the integrity of moral and the exercise of Christian virtue, to lead men to that happiness which is held out to every one in Heaven. And since it is, as we have said, a perfect society, therefore it is endowed with a living power and efficacy which is not derived from any external source, but in virtue of the ordinance of God and its own constitution, inherent in its very nature; for the same reason it has an inborn power of making laws, and justice requires that in its exercise it should be dependent on no one; it must likewise have freedom in other matters appertaining to its rights.

But this freedom is not of a kind to occasion rivalry or envy; for the Church does not covet power, nor is she urged on by any selfish desire; but this one thing she does wish, this

only does she seek, to preserve amongst men the duties which virtue imposes, and by this means and in this way to provide for their everlasting welfare. Therefore is she wont to be yielding and indulgent as a mother; yea, it not unfrequently happens that in making large concessions to the exigencies of States, she refrains from the exercise of her own rights, as the compacts often concluded with civil governments abundantly testify.

Nothing is more foreign to her disposition than to encroach on the rights of Civil power; but the Civil power in its turn must respect the rights of the Church, and beware of arrogating them in any degree to itself. Now, what is the ruling spirit of the times when actual events and circumstances are taken into account? No other than this: it has been the fashion to regard the Church with suspicion, to despise, and hate, and spitefully calumniate her; and, more intolerable still, men strive with might and main to bring her under the sway of Civil governments. Hence it is that her property has been plundered and her liberty curtailed: hence, again, that the training of her priesthood has been beset with difficulties; that laws of exceptional rigor have been passed against her clergy; that Religious Orders, those excellent safeguards of Christianity, have been suppressed and placed under a ban; in a word,

the principles and practice of the regalists have been renewed with increased virulence.

Such a policy is a violation of the most sacred rights of the Church, and it breeds enormous evils to States, for the very reason that it is in open conflict with the purposes of God. When God, in His most wise providence, placed over human society both temporal and spiritual authority, He intended them to remain distinct indeed, but by no means disconnected and at war with each other. On the contrary, both the will of God and the common weal of human society imperatively require that the Civil power should be in accord with the ecclesiastical in its rule and administration.

Hence the State has its own peculiar rights and duties, the Church likewise has hers; but it is necessary that each should be united with the other in the bonds of concord. Thus will it come about that the close mutual relations of Church and State will be freed from the present turmoil, which for manifold reasons is ill-advised and most distressing to all well-disposed persons; furthermore, it will be brought to pass that, without confusion or separation of the peculiar interests of each, the people will *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*

There is likewise a great danger threatening

unity on the part of that association which goes by the name of the Society of Freemasons, whose fatal influence for a long time past oppresses Catholic nations in particular. Favored by the agitations of the times, and waxing insolent in its power and resources and success, it strains every nerve to consolidate its sway and enlarge its sphere. It has already sallied forth from its hiding-places, where it hatched its plots, into the throng of cities, and as if to defy the Almighty, has set up its throne in this very city of Rome, the capital of the Catholic world. But what is most disastrous is, that wherever it has set its foot it penetrates into all ranks and departments of the commonwealth, in the hope of obtaining at last supreme control. This is, indeed, a great calamity; for its depraved principles and iniquitous designs are well known. Under the pretence of vindicating the rights of man and of reconstituting society, it attacks Christianity; it rejects revealed doctrine, denounces practices of piety, the divine sacraments, and every sacred thing as superstition; it strives to eliminate the Christian character from marriage and the family and the education of youth, and from every form of instruction, whether public or private, and to root out from the minds of men all respect for authority, whether human or divine. On its own part, it preaches the worship of

nature, and maintains that by the principles of nature are truth and probity and justice to be measured and regulated. In this way, as is quite evident, man is being driven to adopt customs and habits of life akin to those of the heathen, only more corrupt in proportion as the incentives to sin are more numerous.

Although We have spoken on this subject in the strongest terms before, yet We are led by Our Apostolic watchfulness to urge it once more, and We repeat Our warning again and again, that in the face of such an eminent peril no precaution, howsoever great, can be looked upon as sufficient. May God in His mercy bring to naught their impious designs; nevertheless, let all Christians know and understand that the shameful yoke of Freemasonry must be shaken off once and for all; and let them be the first to shake it off who are most galled by its oppression—the men of Italy and of France. With what weapons and by what method this may best be done We Ourselves have already pointed out: the victory cannot be doubtful to those who trust in that Leader Whose divine words still remain in all their force: *I have overcome the world.*

Were this twofold danger averted, and government and states restored to the unity of faith, it is wonderful what efficacious remedies for evils and abundant store of benefits would

ensue. We will touch upon the principal ones.

The first regards the dignity and office of the Church. She would receive that honor which is her due, and she would go on her way, free from envy and strong in her liberty, as the minister of Gospel truth and grace, to the notable welfare of States. For as she has been given by God as a teacher and guide to the human race, she can contribute assistance which is peculiarly adapted to direct even the most radical transformations of time to the common good, to solve the most complicated questions, and to promote uprightness and justice, which are the most solid foundations of the commonwealth.

Moreover, there would be a marked increase of union among the nations, a thing most desirable to ward off the horrors of war.

We behold the condition of Europe. For many years past peace has been rather an appearance than a reality. Possessed with mutual suspicions, almost all the nations are vying with one another in equipping themselves with military armaments. Inexperienced youths are removed from parental direction and control, to be thrown amid the dangers of the soldier's life; robust young men are taken from agriculture, or ennobling studies, or trade, or the arts, to be put under arms. Hence, the treasures of

States are exhausted by the enormous expenditure, the national resources are frittered away, and private fortunes impaired; and this, as it were, armed peace, which now prevails, cannot last much longer. Can this be the normal condition of human society? Yet we cannot escape from this situation, and obtain true peace, except by the aid of Jesus Christ. For to repress ambition and covetousness and envy —the chief instigators of war—nothing is more fitted than the Christian virtues and, in particular, the virtue of justice; for, by its exercise, both the law of nations and the faith of treaties may be maintained inviolate, and the bonds of brotherhood continue unbroken, if men are but convinced that *justice exalteth a nation*.

As in its external relations, so in the internal life of the State itself, the Christian virtues will provide a guarantee of the common weal much more sure and stronger far than any which laws or armies can afford. For there is no one who does not see that the dangers to public security and order are daily on the increase, since seditious societies continue to conspire for the overthrow and ruin of States, as the frequency of their atrocious outrages testifies.

There are two questions, forsooth—the one called the *social*, the other the *political* question—which are discussed with the greatest

vehemence. Both of them, without doubt, are of the last importance, and, though praiseworthy efforts have been put forth, in studies, and measures, and experiments, for their wise and just solution, yet nothing could contribute more to this purpose than that the minds of men in general should be imbued with right sentiments of duty from the internal principle of Christian faith. We treated expressly of the social question, in this sense, a short time ago, from the stand-point of principles drawn from the Gospel and natural reason.

As regards the political question, which aims at reconciling liberty with authority—two things which many confound in theory, and separate too widely in practice—most efficient aid may be derived from Christian philosophy. For, when this point has been settled and recognized by common agreement, that whatsoever the form of government the authority is from God, reason at once perceives that in some there is a legitimate right to command, in others the corresponding duty to obey, and that without prejudice to their dignity, since obedience is rendered to God rather than to man; and God has denounced the most rigorous judgment against those in authority, if they fail to represent Him with uprightness and justice. Then the liberty of the individual can afford ground of suspicion or envy to no one;

since, without injury to any, his conduct will be guided by truth and rectitude and whatever is allied to public order. Lastly, if it be considered what influence is possessed by the Church, the mother of and peacemaker between rulers and peoples, whose mission it is to help them both with her authority and counsel, then it will be most manifest how much it concerns the common weal that all nations should resolve to unite in the same belief and the same profession of the Christian faith.

With these thoughts in Our mind and ardent yearnings in Our heart, We see from afar what would be the new order of things that would arise upon the earth, and nothing could be sweeter to Us than the contemplation of the benefits that would flow from it. It can hardly be imagined what immediate and rapid progress would be made all over the earth, in all manner of greatness and prosperity, with the establishment of tranquillity and peace, the promotion of studies, the founding and the multiplying on Christian lines, according to our directions, of associations for the cultivators of the soil, for workmen and tradesmen, through whose agency rapacious usury would be put down, and a large field opened up for useful labors.

And these abundant benefits would not be confined within the limits of civilized nations,

but, like an overcharged river, would flow far and wide. It must be remembered, as We observed at the outset, that an immense number of races have been waiting, all through the long ages, to receive the light of truth and civilization. Most certainly, the counsels of God with regard to the eternal salvation of peoples are far removed above the understanding of man; yet if miserable superstition still prevails in so many parts of the world, the blame must be attributed in no small measure to religious dissensions. For, as far as it is given to human reason to judge from the nature of events, this seems without doubt to be the mission assigned by God to Europe, to go on by degrees, carrying Christian civilization to every portion of the earth. The beginnings and first growth of this great work, which sprang from the labors of former centuries, were rapidly receiving large development, when all of a sudden the discord of the sixteenth century broke out. Christendom was torn with quarrels and dissensions, Europe exhausted with contests and wars, and the sacred missions felt the baneful influence of the times. While the causes of dissension still remain, what wonder is it that so large a portion of mankind is held enthralled with barbarous customs and insane rites?

Let us one and all, then, for the sake of the common welfare, labor with equal assiduity to

restore the ancient concord. In order to bring about this concord, and spread abroad the benefits of the Christian revelation, the present is the most seasonable time; for never before have the sentiments of human brotherhood penetrated so deeply into the souls of men, and never in any age has man been seen to seek out his fellow-men more eagerly, in order to know them better and to help them. Immense tracts of land and sea are traversed with incredible rapidity, and thus extraordinary advantages are afforded, not only for commerce and scientific investigations, but also for the propagation of the word of God from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

We are well aware of the long labors involved in the restoration of that order of things which We desire; and it may be that there are those who consider that We are far too sanguine, and look for things that are rather to be wished for than expected. But We unhesitatingly place all Our hope and confidence in the Saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ, well remembering what great things have been achieved in times past by the folly of the Cross and its preaching, to the astonishment and confusion of the *wisdom of the world.* We beg of princes and rulers of States, appealing to their statesmanship and earnest solicitude for the people, to weigh Our counsels in the balance of truth

and second them with their authority and favor. If only a portion of the looked-for results should come about, it will cause no inconsiderable boon in the general decadence, when the intolerable evils of the present day bring with them the dread of further evils in days to come.

The last years of the past century left Europe worn out with disasters, and panic-stricken with the turmoils of revolution. And why should not our present century, which is now hastening to its close, by a reversion of circumstances bequeath to mankind the pledges of concord, with the prospects of the great benefits which are bound up in the unity of the Christian faith?

May God, Who *is rich in mercy, and in Whose power are the times and moments*, grant Our wishes and desires, and in His great goodness hasten the fulfilment of that divine promise of Jesus Christ: *There will be one Fold and one Shepherd.*

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